

Sheik Anorak -- Mannheim -- Cafe Prag, 2013-11-09

Small
Intimate
Dense
(Later) crowded

A drumkit and a guitar and equipment on a podium, while rows of seats appear lined up in front of it, as well as in an adjacent hallway.

A teacher to lecture his curious pupils.
A conjurer to perform his magic(k)al electronic tricks.

Sheik Anorak is from France and this concert is part of Enjoy Jazz 15. A trip through various videos on numerous Internet sites reveals readily the rather extreme nature of this band. His art is by no means the standard set. One musician plays it all: drums, guitars and noise. Thank god it is possible to sample stuff live on stage these days. Basically, this happens to the guitars, while the drums are used to have some fun on stage. And this is the way it goes on this evening. First, the melodies of the guitars are "recorded / stored", then brought into the proper order, then drums set the pace and the samples are thrown in now and then -- sometimes more, sometimes less ... but they are always there.

Well, even though jazz might be the banner under which all is supposed to appear, one cannot help but notice how facets from the post-rock genre have found their way into the music. This is especially true for the first two compositions, while the overall direction leads the audience rather in the realm of experimentation and noise.

-- someone approaches the stage from the hallway, walks up to the podium, and raises the middle-finger up in disgust (presumably about the noise) and leaves ... and Sheik Anorak blows a kiss in return. --

Over the course of an hour several of the attendees leave it. Whether it is the music, whether it is the overall level of the sound is difficult to say, but at least in regard to an elderly couple both arguments can be suspected.

The cliché of noise becomes somewhat true on this evening.

Without going too much into detail and discuss all to death, the performance of this French artist is really intense, noisy and powerful. Even though the conceptual limitations of this approach reveal themselves readily on this evening, the music is of a kind that has the ability to stick with a person and to not let loose. With such a small room to play in, the arrangements and the style of it all are able to unfold their potential. Why? With too large a distance it may be bereft of its fascination, as the audience is unable to experience the closeness between them and the musician. You need to see it to believe it, you need to be amazed how it all unfolds itself and miraculously assembles itself into a wild energetic melody. Then, and even though repetitious characteristics have a slight negative effect in this regard, the audience is able to experience the performance in its fullest.

Questions, comments, hate mail and whatnot shall be directed at:

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